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## Impediments Facing the Foodstuff Importers in Jordan

A Workshop  
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Ministry of Planning

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## Objectives of the Workshop and Expected Results

### Background of the Workshop

The National Team to study competitiveness is studying the competitiveness of the national economy in Jordan. This is done by means of providing a partial data-base of the overall economic sectors. The Team is also concerned with studying any issues concerned with the private sector in Jordan which may impede their work and reduce competitiveness..

According a memo submitted by the Foodstuff Traders' Association to the Minister of Industry and Trade, and a copy to the Minister of Planning with regards to impediments facing the sector of foodstuff importers in Jordan. The workshop to discuss these impediments and the attempt to reach recommendations to find effective and prompt solutions.

### The Objective of the Workshop:

A group of those concerned with the topic foodstuff of both the public and private sectors to define the main impediments and try to reach recommendations to be followed up by the concerned parties.

### The Expected Results:

Completing an understanding of the factual status of this sector and reaching a set of reasonable and fixed recommendations while defining their priorities and the concerned parties to provide them for the decision makers.

### Program of the Workshop

Time	Topic	Duration/ minute
10:15	Introducing the participants and announcing the objectives and methods of work	10
10:25	A presentation about the Competitiveness Team at the Ministry of Planning	10
10:35	Presenting the main impediments faced by the Foodstuff importers and the possible procedures to deal therewith	10
10:45	A group discussion and completing the problem analysis	75
12:00	A break	15
12:15	Completing the Group Discussion	120

The Problem	Description of the Problem	Results	Recommendation	Parties proposed for implementation
Refrigerating Series	<p>Regulations of the Ministry of Health on refrigerating require the rejection or acceptance of clearing a shipment of <b>frozen</b> or cooled foodstuff based on the temperature degree. However, <b>this is only</b> one element among many others that must be taken <b>into</b> consideration such <b>as</b> the material type, the lab <b>test</b> and the clinical test.</p> <p>When measuring the temperature at Aqaba Port, the <b>Ministry</b> of Health adopts readings of the thermograph or the computer in addition to the manual thermometer. However, there are certain conditions that <b>turn</b> the manual thermometer reading doubtful such <b>as</b>: the technical expertise of the sample committee, the accuracy of tools, <b>scales</b> and the weather conditions when measuring temperature.</p>	<p><b>Rejecting many shipments</b> for reasons of refrigerating series without holding the lab test to <b>assure</b> their validity.</p> <p>2. Most of the international liners have stopped their transportation of cooled and frozen foodstuff to Aqaba Port; this <b>raised</b> the <b>cost</b> of shipment to Jordan in comparison with the neighboring countries.</p>	<p>1. <b>The Technical Committee must</b> study the recommendations of the International Institute of Refrigerating. They <b>must</b> submit their recommendations in thirty days.<sup>1</sup></p> <p>2. <b>Amending</b> the regulations of transporting and storing <b>the foodstuff</b> to stipulate not to consider the temperature <b>as</b> the only indicator to reject or accept the frozen or cooled food. It rather <b>must</b> be based on several elements to judge the validity of the shipment such <b>as</b> type of food and lab and clinical tests.</p>	<p>The <b>Foodstuff</b> Directorate The Food Administration council The Jordanian Universities The Foodstuff <b>Traders'</b> Association</p>

<sup>1</sup> The recommendation in the workshop was as follows; however, the drafting committee had it read **as** stated above:

1. **Immediately** stopping the rejection of food shipments just because of interruption of recording the temperature degrees during shipping or due to interruption of refrigerating for **six** hours.
2. Immediately stopping the rejection of Shipments just because they violate the regulations of the **Ministry** of Health with regard to the conditions of transporting and storing foodstuff and **taking** a prompt and immediate procedure to amend these regulations to be submitted to a specialized committee who will decide the relevant temperature degree for transportation and storage of foodstuff.
3. The temperature degree must not be considered the only indicator to reject or accept the frozen or cooled foodstuff; however, this must be related to several factors that must be considered when judging the validity of the shipment such as: the lab test and the clinical test.
4. The **Ministry** of Health and the Standards and Measurements Corporation must benefit **from** the internationally approved references such **as** the International Refrigeration Institute. They must also benefit **from** the laws of advanced countries in **this** field. In this respect, a delegation **can** be sent from the Directorate of Food Safety and the General Association of **Food** Traders, **the** Association of Marine Navigation Agencies, and a special scientific advisor in order to review experiences of the neighboring countries **with** ports of similar conditions **as** Aqaba. For **instance**, Jeddah **Port**.
5. To issue a **standard** for the transportation and storage of foodstuff by the Standards and Measurements Corporation.

The Problem	Description of the Problem	Results	Recommendation	Parties proposed for implementation
	Also the regulations require the rejection of clearing the frozen or cooled foodstuff shipment in case of interrupted recording of the thermograph or the computer or refrigeration in the <del>Container</del> for	3. A large economic loss is incurred for Jordan in addition to a moral issue of ill reputation.	3. Stop <del>temperature measuring</del> <sup>measuring</sup> <del>until the</del> in case of doubts with regard to the viability of the  In this case, the referential scale methods must be followed as those in CODEX. <sup>2</sup>	
	Administration Council for approval.			

<sup>2</sup> CODEX :International Food Constitution (Alimentarius)

The Problem	Description of the Problem	Results	Recommendation	Parties proposed for implementation
Customs Identification Numbers	<p><b>When</b> the custom identification number on the container is different from that in the shipment records, the Ministry of Health will reject the clearance of the <b>goods</b>. However, <b>this</b> difference in numbers <b>can</b> be a result of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> a human error</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Opening</b> the container in one port for inspection <b>purposes</b> before reaching Aqaba.</li> </ul> <p>It is assumed that the Ministry of Health has nothing to <b>do with</b> the custom identification numbers. <b>This</b> is a responsibility of the <b>customs</b> Department only.</p>	Refusing <b>many</b> containers for no reasonable reason; <b>just because</b> of difference between the customs number on the <b>container</b> and the number in the shipment records.	<b>Issuing</b> regulations to the Foodstuff safety Directorate to stop the practice of rejecting a shipment due to the difference in the customs identifications number. <b>This</b> problem must be left for the <b>discretion</b> of the <b>Customs</b> Department <b>as long as</b> the container's <b>contents</b> are in compliance with the shipment records. The <b>health issues</b> must be the faculty of the Food safety Directorate/the Ministry of Health	The Customs Department Food Safety Directorate
*	between 20-30 days when things <b>go</b> all right. <b>This</b> is due to many reasons such <b>as</b> the plurality of parties concerned with food control; some other reasons are due to the administrative procedures <b>taken</b> by each <b>party</b> .	Stopping' the foodstuff shipments for long <b>periods</b> of time. <b>This</b> incurs a high cost to be shouldered by the importer due to the idle <b>status</b> of the container in addition to the <b>cost</b> of energy supply to <b>keep</b> the temperature of cooling/freezing the shipment	<b>Taking</b> a prompt procedure to review the administrative proceedings of each of the parties concerned with food control. Unjustified delay in completing the procedures must be avoided. In this respect, the <b>assistance</b> of an administrative <b>expertise can</b> be solicited to study the current procedures and suggest the adequate solutions.	The Foodstuff Safety Directorate The <b>Standards</b> and Measurements Directorate The <b>Ministry</b> Agriculture The <b>Customs</b> Department The Jordanian Universities

Sampling  
release program

The Problem	Description of the Problem	Results	Recommendation	Parties proposed for implementation
The method of taking frozen food samples is a general problem	<p>The regulations of sample taking stipulate the requirement of taking samples in very small amounts. However, in practice and due to the impossibility of taking small samples on site, the sizes of samples are so large. For example, full boxes are taken and taken to the lab and melting their contents to take a small sample.</p> <p>The General Foodstuff Traders' Association offered to provide the necessary tools to take a sample of frozen meat. However, they received no response.</p> <p>Status of the Committee of Sample Taking: There is a residence for the Committee. There is no special communication means and there are no refrigerated rooms to take samples.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Taking samples in large amounts, this incurs burdens to be shouldered by the Trader.</li> <li>2. Due to lack of necessary tools to take samples, cannot be guaranteed have a sample representative of the shipment.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Addressing the Corporation of Ports to improve the conditions of sample taking at the Port of Customs to take the necessary samples. This can be done through providing the buildings, and adequate spaces at the Containers' Port</li> <li>2. Instructing the Foodstuff Safety Directorate to accept the offer of the Food Traders' Association to provide the necessary tools to take samples from the frozen foodstuff on sites.</li> <li>3. Qualifying a sufficient number of technicians to take samples accurately and in a representative manner.</li> <li>4. Starting the improvement system of control taking into consideration:</li> <li>3 shipments coming from various parties applying the HACCP<sup>3</sup></li> </ol>	<p>Food Safety Directorate The Standards and Measurements Corporation The Ministry of Agriculture The Corporation of Ports</p>

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<sup>3</sup> HACCP: The system of risk analysis and critical control points; this is a system of the food manufacturing process enforced in food factories in the developed countries. The importing party is entitled to monitor the supplier factories to assure the level of application.

			implementation
			<p>the historical files of the supplier company dealing with Jordan.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The Country of Origin</p> <p>Fewer samples must be taken from the supplies applying HACCP or those whose historical files of dealing with Jordan show no violation or those coming from the country of origin applying strict control procedures.</p>



The Problem	Description of the Problem	Results	Recommendation	Parties proposed for implementation
<p>samples of the meat and fish</p>	<p>meat according to the <b>production dates</b> of each (from each day, each month, each year) and of each <b>size</b> and of each <b>type</b>.</p>	<p>amounts; this incurs a <b>burden</b> to be shouldered by the <b>trader</b>.</p>	<p>Committee of specialists to study the problem taking into <b>consideration</b> the proposals of the private sector in this respect <b>based</b> on one of the following suggestions to take samples of meat:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> samples according to the <b>date</b> of each month and each year without <b>taking</b> samples of the date of each day no matter of which <b>type</b> the piece should be.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Samples of each piece without taking samples of each slaughterdate.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Samples of each slaughter <b>date</b> without taking samples of each <b>piece</b> type.</li> </ul>	<p>Food Safety Directorate. Standards and Measurements Coporation The Ministry of Agriculture The Corporation of Ports</p>
<p>Germicide levels of raw food stuff</p> <p><i>Imp. Risk analysis HACCP</i></p>	<p>The <b>Ministry</b> of Health rejects or accepts a shipment of raw foodstuff (meat, fish, chicken) according to certain germicide levels stipulated in the Jordanian standards and the regulations of the Ministry of Health. However, there are no studies or scientific <b>data</b> that <b>can</b> relate certain germicide levels in the <b>raw</b> foodstuff with the health harm that <b>can</b> be caused in case of consuming such <b>stuff</b>.  Thus, many of the advanced <b>countries</b> depend on the germicide levels <b>as</b> guiding <b>indicators</b> and for the purposes of <b>quality</b> control rather than <b>taking</b> a resolution whether to reject or accept a <b>certain</b> consignment.</p>	<p>Rejecting many <b>foodstuff</b> shipments as they do not comply with the valid <b>germicide</b> levels.</p>	<p><b>Issuing</b> regulations stipulating the <b>reference</b> to the scientific sources of the specialized international bodies to define the <b>types</b> and levels of <b>germs</b> that must be tested <b>as standards</b> to <b>accept</b> or reject the <b>entry</b> of <b>goods</b> at the borders.</p>	<p>The Food Safety Directorate The Labs' Department/ Ministry of Health Standards&amp;Measurements Corporation</p>

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dealing with food issues	of these parties overlap one the other due to the absence of coordination among the several governmental parties in the control process of foodstuff.	parties. 2. The multiple procedures which result in increasing the time of delay which in turn lead to more expenses	<p>ulate enforcement of the</p> <p>which was issued in 1998. However, the only step so far done in the establishment process is the assignment of a Director General.</p>	Food Health Directorate Greater Amman Municipality
			<p>should replace the several parties concerned with food control. <del>until</del> being established, the roles of these parties must be reviewed; it must reduce the intervention of jobs.</p> <p>5. The Private Sector must be represented in any Law of Food Control.<sup>4</sup></p>	

The Ministry prepared the Draft Law of Food Control. This Law stipulates the establishment of a special corporation for food in order to be submitted to the Legislation Bureau. **The** Private Sector used to be represented in the deliberations of the Law until three months ago. **They** had reservations on **some** of the articles of the Law which **has** been submitted to the Legislation Bureau recently while the private sector has **been** made absent at this **stage**. This version **is** of the law is completely different from the above draft **law**. It maintains the role of the Ministry of **Health** represented by the Food Control Department while expanding their authorities and powers.